

James M. and Lizzie N. Skyles House
108 Holmes Avenue
Llysven Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5891

HABS
PA,
9-ALTO,
149 -

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JAMES M. AND LIZZIE N. SKYLES HOUSE

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Location: 108 Holmes Avenue

Date of Erection: 1907

Description: Generous and straightforward wood trim, especially the wide bargeboards in the porch and dormer gables and the plain, flat bands accenting doors and windows, gives this house a more modern appearance than three other similarly styled Colonial houses within a three-block area on Coleridge Avenue and Logan Boulevard. This style is a unique combination of influences, although its basic form is a rationalized Queen Anne still dependent upon projecting bays (Fig. 6.33) and dormers for surface interest, but spared the more frivolous and dated complexities. All four examples have an eccentrically offset entry, exaggerated in this case by the dual emphasis of an elaborate door surround (complete with bevelled-glass sidelights, cornerlights, and transom) and a quasi-classical pediment set into the shed roof of the full porch. Also unique to this house are the side-gable roof and the two minor gables surmounting the bays.

History: Veronica Fogle, wife of woodworker and Altoona Suburban Home Company principal John A. Fogle, purchased this lot in 1896 for \$800. In 1906, she sold it for \$1,000 to Lizzie N. Skyles, wife of James M. Skyles, cashier at the First National Bank where John Lloyd was president. The house was probably begun in 1907, when the Skyles were taxed for a house and lot in Llyswen, but 1908-09 tax records describe the house as unfinished. It does not appear on the 1909 Sanborn insurance map. The 1912-13 city directory shows the Skyles residing at 111 Coleridge Ave., which corresponds with this lot and house, although it faces Holmes. James Skyles was vice president of the First National Bank in 1925 when he and his wife sold the house and half of the original lot to Amos Davis, assistant manager of the Juniata shops of the PRR. The Davis family owned and occupied the home until 1971.

Sources: Sanborns: 1920, 1932, 1951. Tax assessment records. City directories. Deed books: 160/79; 167/228; 342/104; 915/128.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llyswen (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.